



## FACT SHEET

# What Is the National Aging Services Network?

The National Aging Services Network is a human service delivery system of federal, state, and local agencies that work together to provide services and opportunities to help older Americans lead independent and dignified lives at home and in their communities through the Older Americans Act (OAA). The Network serves seven million aging adults age 60 and over and over 436,000 caregivers.

The Network is comprised of the Administration on Aging (AoA) at the federal level, 56 State Units on Aging, 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 243 tribal organizations, over 29,000 local community service organizations, 500,000 volunteers, and a wide variety of national organizations.

### What are the Components of the Aging Network?

#### *The Administration on Aging*

As the federal leader of the National Aging Services Network, AoA is committed to making fundamental changes in the long-term care system by developing more home and community-based care options for older persons and their family members. AoA is focused on aging policy and service innovation to provide older people the tools they need to live independently by building capacity of the Aging Services Network.

In this role, AoA works to heighten awareness among other Federal agencies, organizations, groups, and the public about the valuable contributions of older Americans and alerts the public to the needs of vulnerable older people. AoA implements the OAA and provides grants for research, training, and demonstration projects.

#### *State Units on Aging*

The State Units on Aging (SUA) serve as the state governmental agencies for aging issues, working with many state agencies and other public and private sector entities on behalf of older people. AoA awards OAA funds to SUAs to support home and community-based services and elder rights programs including but not limited to legal services, and long term care ombudsmen. SUAs then award grants to designated AAAs so that programs and services can be tailored to meet the needs of older persons in a particular area within a state.

#### *Area Agencies on Aging*

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) address the needs and concerns of older people at the local level. Area Agencies vary from place to place depending on local needs. The agency might be a public agency located within county government, a regional planning council, a unit of city government, or a private nonprofit organization. Their primary responsibilities include advocacy on behalf of older persons, planning and service development, and administration of a wide variety of funds to public and private local providers for the provision of home and community-based support services.

### What Services Are Provided Under the Older Americans Act?

The Older Americans Act (OAA) was signed into law on July 14, 1965 and was established to ensure that older Americans have the opportunity to age with dignity, have choices in managing their own lives, and remain active and independent within their communities. There are six core services funded by the Older Americans Act and include:

**Supportive Services** enable communities to provide rides for older persons to medical appointments, and grocery shopping, senior centers and other locations to assist that individual in maintaining their independence in the community. Additionally, a supportive service can include housekeeping and personal care in the home, and extends to community services such as adult day care and information and assistance.

Through **Nutrition Services**, older Americans can receive Home Delivered Meals, commonly referred to as “meals on wheels” and congregate meals that are served in settings such as senior centers, adult day care centers and churches.

The goal of **Preventive Health Services** is to educate and provide services to older persons in the community to increase healthy lifestyles through physical activity, appropriate diet and nutrition and regular health screenings.

**The National Family Caregiver Support Program** was created to help the millions of people who provide the primary care for spouses, parents, older relatives and friends through services including:

1. Provide information to caregivers about available services;
2. Provide assistance to caregivers in gaining access to services;
3. Provide individual counseling, organize support groups, and provide problem solving training for caregivers;
4. Provide respite care to enable caregivers to be temporarily relieved from their caregiving responsibilities;
5. Provide supplemental services on a limited basis to complement the care provided by caregivers.

The program also recognizes the needs of grandparents caring for grandchildren and for caregivers of those 19 and under with mental retardation or developmental difficulties.

**Services that protect the rights of vulnerable older persons** detect and prevent elder abuse in the community as well as long-term care facilities and work to combat consumer fraud as well as to enhance the physical, mental emotional and financial well-being of older Americans. These programs focus on elder rights with services such as pension counseling, elder abuse investigations, long-term care ombudsman programs that serve to investigate and resolve complaints made by or for residents of nursing, board and care, and similar adult homes, and legal assistance.

**Services to Native Americans** include nutrition and supportive services designed to meet the unique cultural and social traditions of tribal and native organizations and organizations serving Native Hawaiians.

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## How do I Find Help in my Community?

*To find resources and support services through the National Aging Network, contact your local Area Agency on Aging. In a few states, the State Unit or Office on Aging serves as the AAA. You can locate the appropriate AAA or local service provider through the Administration on Aging-supported, nationwide, toll-free information and assistance directory called the Eldercare Locator. Call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern Time. For 24-hour access to the Locator, visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).*

